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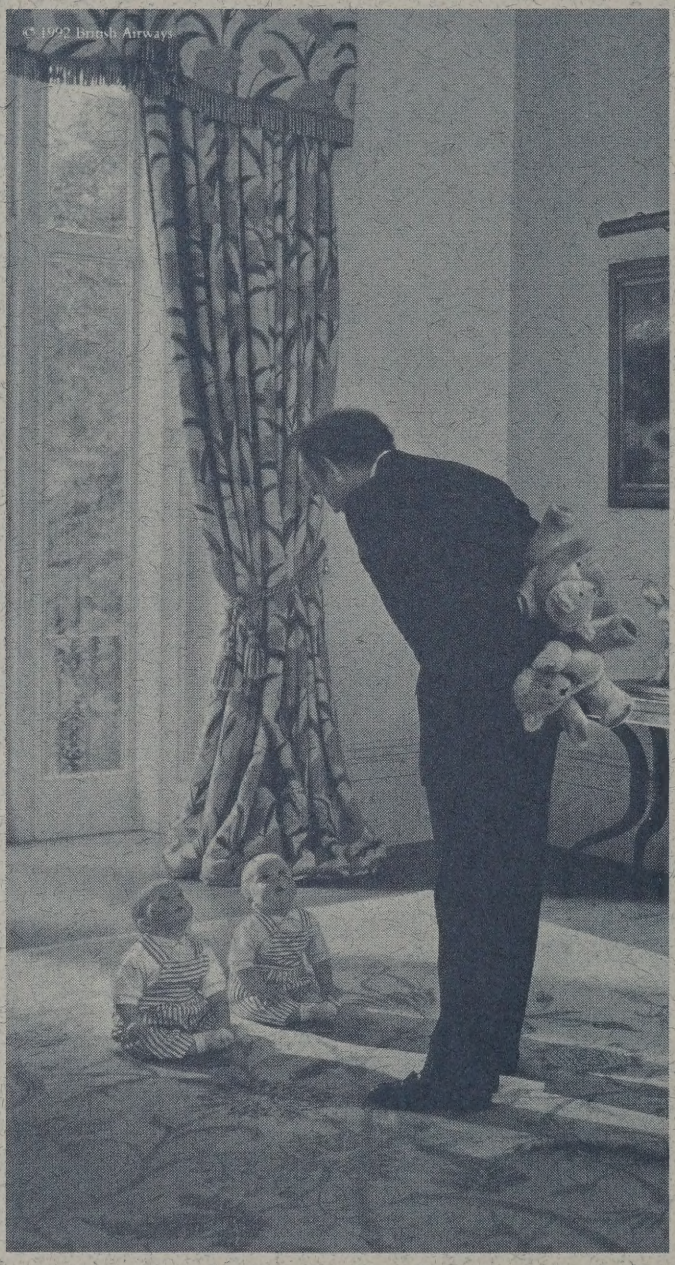

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MESSIAH, A SACRED ORATORIO

(Dublin version, 1742)

GEORG FRIDERIC HANDEL

(1685-1759)

MESSIAH, A SACRED ORATORIO

Original English text taken from the Scriptures by Charles Jennens.

PART THE FIRST

Sinfony

Recitative, accompanied (Tenor)
Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God: Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplish'd, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of Him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (Isaiah XL, 1-3)

Aria (Tenor)
Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight and the rough places plain. (Isaiah XL, 4)

Chorus
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. And all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. (Isaiah XL, 5)

Recitative, accompanied (Bass I)
Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Yet once a little while, and I will shake the heav'ns and the earth, the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in, behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. (Haggai II, 6-7; Malachi III, 1)

Recitative (Bass I)
But who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire. (Malachi III, 2)

Chorus
And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. (Malachi III, 3)

Recitative (Alto I)
Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel, "God with us". (Isaiah VII, 14; Matthew I, 23)

Aria and Chorus (Alto I)
O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion get Thee up into the high mountain; O Thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem lift up Thy voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: Behold your God! Arise, shine, for Thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon Thee. (Isaiah XL, 9; LX, 1)

Recitative, accompanied (Bass I)
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon Thee, and His glory shall be seen upon Thee. And the Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising. (Isaiah IX, 2-3)

Aria (Bass I)
The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. And they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. (Isaiah IX, 2)

Chorus
For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called: Wonderful Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace! (Isaiah IX, 6)

Pifa

Recitative (Soprano)
There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. (Luke II, 8)

Arioso (Soprano)
And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. (Luke II, 9)

Recitative (Soprano)
And the angel said unto them: Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
(Luke II,10-11)

Recitative, accompanied (Soprano)
And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heav'nly host, praising God, and saying: (Luke II, 13)

Chorus
Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will toward men. (Luke II, 14)

Aria (Soprano)
Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King com'th unto thee. He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen. (Zechariah IX, 9-10)

Recitative (Contralto)
Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. (Isaiah XXXV, 5-6)

Aria (Contralto)
He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. Come unto Him, all ye that labour, come unto Him all ye are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him; for he is meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (Isaiah XL, 11; Matthew XI, 28-29)

Chorus
His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light. (Matthew XI, 30)

PART THE SECOND

Chorus
Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. (John I, 29)

Aria (Contralto)
He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: he hid not his face from shame and spitting.
(Isaiah LIII, 3: 1,6)

Chorus
Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. (Isaiah LIII, 4-5)

Chorus
And with His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah LIII, 5)

Chorus
All we like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned ev'ry one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah LIII, 6)

Recitative, accompanied (Tenor)
All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying:
(Psalm XXII, 7)

Chorus
He trusted in God that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, if he delight in Him. (Psalm XXII, 8)

Recitative, accompanied (Soprano)
Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He is full of heaviness; He looked for some to have pity on him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him. (Psalm LXIX, 21)

Arioso (Soprano)
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow. (Lamentations I, 2)

Recitative, accompanied (Soprano)
He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of Thy people was He stricken.
(Isaiah LIII, 8)

Aria (Soprano)
But thou didst not leave his soul in hell; nor didst thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. (Psalm XVI,10)

Chorus
Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts: He is the King of glory. (Psalm XXV, 7-10)

Recitative (Tenor)
Unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee? (Hebrews I, 5)

Chorus
Let all the angels of God worship Him. (Hebrews I, 6)

Aria (Bass I)
Thou art gone up on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even for Thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them. (Psalm LXVIII, 18)

Chorus
The Lord gave the word; great was the company of the preachers. (Psalm LXVIII, 11)

Duet and Chorus (Alto 1 and 2)
How beautiful are the feet of Him that bring glad tidings of salvation, that saith unto Zion: Thy God reighneth! Break forth into joy glad tidings. (Romans X, 15)

Aria (Base II)
Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and His anointed. (Psalm II, 1-2)

Chorus
Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us. (Psalm II, 3)

Recitative (Tenor)
He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn, the Lord shall have them in derision. (Psalm II, 4)

Aria (Tenor)
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. (Psalm II, 9)

Chorus
Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The Kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah.
(Revelation XIX, 6; XI, 15; XIX, 16)

PART THE THIRD

Aria (Soprano)
I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And tho' worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep. (Job XIX, 25-26; I Corinthians XV, 20)

Chorus
Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (I Corinthians XV, 21, 22)

Recitative, accompanied (Bass I)
Behold I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be chang'd, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. (I Corinthians XV, 51-52)

Aria (Bass I)
The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be rais'd incorruptible, and we shall be chang'd. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (I Corinthians XV, 52-54)

Recitative (Contralto)
Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallow'd up in victory. (I Corinthians XV, 54)

Duet (Alto 2 and Tenor)
O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. (I Corinthians XV, 55-57)

Chorus
But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (I Corinthians XV, 55-57)

Aria (Contralto)
If God is for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us. (Romans VIII, 31, 33-34)

Chorus
Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, glory, and pow'r be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. (Revelation V, 12-13)

Chorus
Amen.

****

One of the pleasures of a world premiere is the uncertainty of the event. Will the new work prove to be a magnificent addition to the artistic heritage of humanity, a total disaster, or something in between? Will the first audience justly evaluate a work's qualities, or will the listeners overrate or too easily dismiss the novelty of the piece? In retrospect, of course, it is easy to label the first performance of *Messiah* in Dublin on April 13, 1742, a great event deserving special commemoration when the new work reaches an age of a quarter-millennium. Yet, despite the success of the first performance, a number of years passed before it was clear that *Messiah* would turn out to be one of the most famous and best-loved compositions of all time, becoming an annual rite all over the English-speaking world and eventually everywhere else too.

Messiah was rather a new sort of work for Handel, too, even in the realm of oratorio, to which he had recently and rather reluctantly turned after a string of failures in the opera house. For decades he had tried to win English audiences to the delights of Italian opera, with which he began his career in Germany, Italy, and finally England. He had enjoyed both splendid successes and monumental failures, the latter partly owing to the high cost of operatic productions and the fees of the most famous Italian singers but eventually to the fact that aristocratic audiences who paid for such things rather lost interest, while the middle class audience had never found much enchantment from listening to dramas in an incomprehensible language.

The Rise of the English Oratorio

As early as 1718 Handel had composed dramatic works in English, the little pastoral gem *Acis and Galatea* and the somewhat more uneven *Esther*, though these were performed in private circumstances outside of London and had no effect on the musical life of the metropolis. But in 1732, after some disillusionment in the opera house, Handel brought out revised versions of both pieces, which attracted public interest for large-scale musical entertainments in their own tongue. During the remainder of the decade his operas were often commercial failures, while audiences welcomed a slowly growing string of oratorios. It gradually became Handel's practice to produce his oratorios during the season of Lent, when stage performances with costumes and theatrical paraphernalia were banned by ecclesiastical authorities. The vacant theaters were thus available for unstaged musical performances.

The use of English texts enticed a much broader middle class audience than the opera had succeeded in luring. Moreover, the plots usually came from the Hebrew scriptures, stories long familiar to the audiences and often comprehensible in modern political terms. The presence of a chorus, almost unknown in Italian opera, added particular musical interest, especially when it turned out that Handel was one of the great masters of choral writing.

Still, Handel tried again and again, in the face of rising costs and public apathy, to promote his beloved Italian opera. Then a stroke in the spring of 1737 partly crippled him and somewhat affected his powers of invention. The utter failure of *Serse* in the spring of 1738 caused him to turn to oratorio with a new focus, composing *Saul*, one of the great musical dramas in the English language. Even then opera remained in his heart. He composed his final such work, *Deidamia* in November 1740, which survived for just three performances the following January. Handel was in severe financial straits; newspapers reported that he was planning to leave England, apparently to go to a spa in Germany. An invitation to produce a season in Dublin was no doubt welcome after his recent failures in London.

Actually Handel's plans for the 1741-42 season seem to have been uncertain for a long time. At this juncture he received from Charles Jennens, who had already written the librettos to *Saul* and *Belshazzar* (and possibly that for *Israel in Egypt* as well), with a new oratorio text of a quite different kind—a collection of Biblical passages conceived not as drama, with dialogue between characters, but rather as a contemplation on the prophetic foretelling of a Messiah and the effects of the Messiah's arrival and heavenly reign. In July 1741 Jennens wrote to a friend that Handel had no plans yet for the following season, "but I hope I shall perswade him to set another Scriptual Collection I have made for him, & perform it for his own Benefit in Passion Week. I hope he will lay out his whole Genius & Skill upon it, that the Composition may excell all his former Compositions, as the Subject excells every other Subject."

The composition of *Messiah* went at a miraculous pace. Handel told Jennens that he expected to take a year to set the text to music, but he actually completed the entire score in just twenty-three days of feverish composition, between August 22 and September 14, 1741, of which the last two days were used in "filling up" the details of the score that he had drafted, almost at improvisatory speed, in the preceding three weeks. The small orchestral ensemble called for—trumpets, drums, strings, and continuo—suggests the possibility that he may have originally intended the work for performance in a relatively out-of-the-way place like Dublin (for a London premiere, he would surely have included oboes and bassoons in his ensemble). In any case, he quickly turned from *Messiah* to the drafting of a more typical oratorio, *Samson*, with a larger orchestra and a dramatic subject. But he did not complete *Samson* in its final details before leaving for Ireland, and it remained unperformed until the following season.

The final plans for the Irish visit must have been completed rather suddenly. Jennens was certainly surprised to discover, when he returned to the city in November for his normal winter season "in town," that Handel had gone away: "it was with some mortification to me to hear that instead of performing [*Messiah*] here he was gone into Ireland with it."

The Dublin Premiere

Handel planned *Messiah* in such a way that it could be performed with only four soloists—one each of soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. This seems an obvious arrangement for us today, but he had never had such a cast in his previous oratorios in London. Since he had yet to book (or even hear) many of the singers who would be available in Dublin, he apparently composed the score without necessarily thinking of specific voices, a rather unusual procedure for him (though he was later to make changes and adjustments for the circumstances of specific performances).

Handel planned a subscription season in Dublin of six concerts, with two performances each of *L'Allegro, Acis and Galatea*, and *Esther* between late December and mid-February. The success of these prompted a second subscription series, ending on April 7, with performances of *Alexander's Feast* and an unstaged production of the opera *Imeneo*, as well as repetitions from the earlier series. By this time Handel was embarked on plans for the premiere of the new work, and already—as happened in every performance he gave to the end of his life—he offered it for charity:

> For Relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the support of the Mercer's Hospital in Stephen's-Street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inns Quay, on Monday the 12th of April, will be performed at the Musick Hall in Fishamble Street, Mr. Handel's new Grand Oratorio call'd the Messiah, in which the Gentlemen of the Choirs of both Cathedrals will assist, with some Concertoes on the Organ, by Mr. Handell.

As it turned out, the performance took place a day later than the date mentioned in the announcement, preceded by an open rehearsal for ticket-holders on April 9; this aroused enormous enthusiasm for the piece. As the *Dublin Journal* reported on the 10th, it "was allowed by the greatest Judges to be the finest Composition of Musick that ever was heard."

Since the performance was designed to raise money for charity, it was desirable to sell as many tickets as possible. A special announcement appeared to that end in the *Dublin Journal*:

> The Stewards of the Charitable Musical Society request the Favour of the Ladies not to come with Hoops [in their dresses] this Day to the Musick-Hall in Fishamble Street: The Gentlemen are desired to come without their Swords.

By this means, a hall designed to seat 600 actually accommodated 700 on the auspicious occasion.

Though designed for a possible cast of four soloists, Handel actually used seven on this first occasion, disposed like the singers in the present performance. We know that Handel reworked elements of *Messiah* on many occasions, often for specific singers, and that the music heard on April 13, 1742, is quite different from the versions that became standardized in the published scores of a later century. The present performance, however, reconstructs, as best contemporary scholarship can do, the musical text of the work as heard by its first enraptured audience.

Handel's Legacy

Following Handel's death, the continuing—and growing—popularity of *Messiah* made Handel the most seriously misunderstood and misrepresented of all the great composers. The one-sided view of Handel progressed so far in the century after his death that a Victorian writer could claim "all Handel's fine Italian airs" to be "essentially of a sacred character," and even today we hear only a small fraction of his large output, with insufficient attention to the dramatic works, though we now realize at last that his essential inspiration was always human and dramatic, not sacred.

Messiah, then, remains unique, among the least typical of Handel's oratorios. Yet, though we may justifiably lament the fact that the other great oratorios have been eclipsed by it, there is no reason to bemoan the work's great popularity; it is consistently of a high level of musical inspiration. Divided into a symbolic three sectoins, *Messiah* tells no story in explicit dramatic terms, but rather provides a series of meditations on the prophecy and realization of God's plan for the redemption of mankind through the coming of the Messiah. Handel arranged his text as a series of "scenes" consisting of a recitative followed by an aria and then a chorus. The recitative explains a situation, to which the aria provides an individual lyrical response; the chorus then supplies the communal response of Christendom. Each such "scene" is a self-contained harmonic unit in the overall plan.

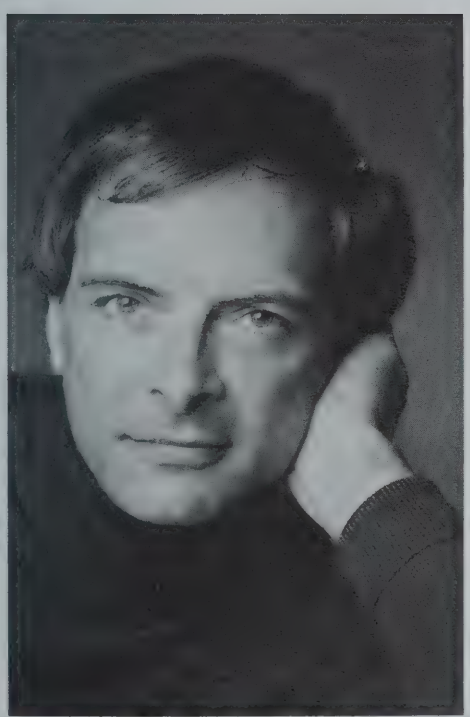
From the magically simple minor-to-major shift at the end of the overture and the opening of the tenor's first recitative on the words "Comfort ye," the music overflows with wonderful imagery and nature-painting to mirror the text; at the same time the arias provide expressive imterpretations of the meaning behind the texts—and display the imaginative powers of a composer who knew and loved the human voice as few have ever done. And the choruses provide the center of gravity; they include some of the greatest examples of the choral art of the Baroque, and, indeed, of all time. If Handel treats the solo voice with singular skill, he offers equally rich treasures in the intertwining of four parts, weaving the lines into delicate contrapuntal webs that suddenly coalesce into mighty blocks of the hammering sound. *Messiah* offers example after example of music that will remain at the heart of the choral repertory as long as we continue to sing.

—Steven Ledbetter

Steven Ledbetter is musicologist and program annotator for the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

CHRISTOPHER

HOGWOOD



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THE NEW YORK TIMES

HANDEL & HAYDN SOCIETY

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H&H

The Handel & Haydn Society
Christopher Hogwood, Artistic Director

One Hundred Seventy–Eighth Season, 1992–1993

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The Handel & Haydn Society
Christopher Hogwood, Artistic Director
One Hundred Seventy-Eighth Season, 1992-93

Thursday, December 3 at 7:30 p.m.
Friday, December 4 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, December 5 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, December 6 at 3:00 p.m.
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Symphony Hall, Boston

Christopher Hogwood, Conductor

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)

MESSIAH, A SACRED ORATORIO

(Dublin version, 1742)

Part the First

INTERMISSION

Part the Second

PAUSE

Part the Third

Sharon Baker, soprano
Judith Malafronte, mezzo-soprano
Derek Lee Ragin, countertenor I
Johnson Flucker, countertenor II
Douglas Johnson, tenor
David Thomas, bass I
David Murray, bass II

The audience is politely requested not to stand during the "Hallelujah" Chorus.

This concert is sponsored by WBUR 90.9 FM

The Handel & Haydn Society dedicates these concerts to Grace and Jack Neises, for their generous and continuing support of H&H. In recognition of their recent endowment gift, H&H names the Principal Horn chair for them.

Christopher Hogwood, Artistic Director

Christopher Hogwood is one of the world's most active conductors and a highly successful recording artist for London/L'Oiseau-Lyre. The founder of The Academy of Ancient Music, the first British orchestra formed to play exclusively Baroque and Classical music on instruments appropriate to the period, he now shares with that orchestra a busy schedule of performances, touring, and recording. In addition, he has been Director of Music for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and this season will be Principal Guest Conductor there, as well as guest conductor with the Australian Chamber Orchestra. Mr. Hogwood has conducted many of the world's great orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the London Philharmonic, and the Cleveland, Chicago, Boston, and National symphony orchestras. Since Mr. Hogwood joined H&H as Artistic Director in 1986, it has become one of the most respected musical ensembles in the country.

Judith Malafronte, Mezzo-Soprano

Judith Malafronte is acclaimed for her vocal virtuosity in many different styles, including opera, oratorio, and chamber music. Her recent operatic engagements include singing the roles of Minerva in Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno D'Ulisse* at the Opera de Montpellier and at the Tokyo Festival, and of Andronico in Handel's *Tamerlano* with the Handel Festival Orchestra in Washington D.C. She has also sung Idamante in Mozart's *Idomeneo* with Boston's Emmanuel Music and has had leading roles at the Opéra de Lyon and the Opera de Wallonie in Liège, and for the BBC in London. Ms. Malafronte is an active performer with early-music ensembles, and has sung with numerous orchestras and oratorio societies throughout the country. She was a Fulbright scholar in Milan, and has won several top musical awards in Europe and the U.S., including the Grand Prize, the Opera Prize, and the Dutch Radio Award at the 1983 International Vocal Competition in Holland. She has made recordings on CBS, EMI, Musical Heritage, RCA, and Harmonia Mundi USA.

Sharon Baker, Soprano

Sharon Baker is widely acclaimed as a singer of Baroque and contemporary music. She has performed with H&H in Bach's *B Minor Mass* at Lincoln Center, and most recently was guest soloist with H&H in an all-Handel program in April 1992. She has also been soloist in music of Mozart with Boston Baroque and in Handel oratorios with the Dallas Bach Society. She sang Mahler's *Third Symphony* with the Boston Philharmonic, and performed in the premiere of Philip Glass's opera *The Fall of the House of Usher*. She has also recently worked on the new Robert Aldridge opera, *Elmer Gantry*. Ms. Baker has appeared at the Tanglewood and Aspin Music Festivals, and has recorded music of Haydn and Handel on the Arabesque label, as well as Mozart's sacred music on the Harmonia Mundi USA label.

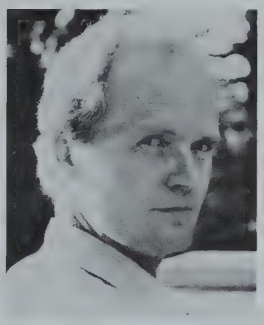
Derek Lee Ragin, Countertenor

Derek Lee Ragin is in demand throughout Europe and the United States for his clear countertenor voice and his versatility in performing works from Baroque opera to Britten and Bernstein. Highlights of recent seasons include his debuts at the Salzburg Festival singing the title role in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* under John Eliot Gardiner; at the Tanglewood Festival with the Boston Camarata; and at the Metropolitan Opera in Handel's *Giulio Cesara*. Mr. Ragin began his vocal training at the Newark Boys Chorus School, where he was named "The Most Outstanding Soloist in the History of the Newark Boys Chorus." He received the Purcell-Britten Prize at the Aldeburgh Festival in 1983, and has since won First Prize in the 1986 Munich International Music Competition, among other prizes. Mr. Ragin has made several recordings, including solo recordings of songs by Purcell and Britten, and Vivaldi cantatas on Etcetera Records. He last performed with H&H in *Althalia* in 1987.

Johnson Flucker, Countertenor

Johnson Flucker began singing as a boy soprano in choirs directed by James Litton and George Guest; and began his countertenor career in the choirs of York Minster and St. Paul's Cathedral, London. Since settling in New York, he has performed regularly with several ensembles there, and has been a soloist with Musica Sacra, Grande Bande, Chanticleer, St. Thomas Choir, The New York Consort of Viols, Clarion Concerts, and the Ensemble for Early Music. Tours have taken him to Turkey, Italy, South Africa, Poland, Finland, Ireland, and Scotland. He has appeared in numerous staged works and opera, including *Daniel and the Lions*, and *Herod and the Slaughter of the Innocents*, and has sung as Oberon in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He sings extensively with the six-man vocal ensemble Talisman, and is Master of the Choristers of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. He has also been featured on commercial and film soundtracks.

David Thomas, Bass

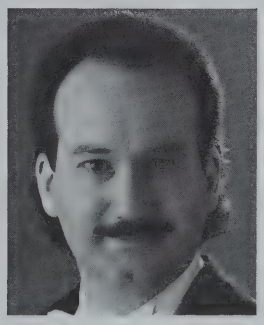


David Thomas began singing as a boy chorister in the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and as a teenager won a choral scholarship to King's College, Cambridge. In his subsequent career, he has appeared at the Festivals of Tanglewood, Edinburgh, Salzburg, Lucerne, the London Promenade Concerts, and many others. Mr. Thomas's oratorio repertoire extends from the Baroque and Classical, in which he specializes, to Britten, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg. He has appeared with some of the world's most renowned conductors; recent engagements have included a television recording of Beethoven's *Choral Symphony*, conducted by Roger Norrington, a performance of Handel's *Orlando*, conducted by Christopher Hogwood, and Haydn's *Creation*, with Simon Rattle. He last appeared with H&H in 1989 in performances of *The Creation*. His many recordings include two performances of *Messiah*, and Mozart's *Requiem* and *C Minor Mass* with Christopher Hogwood.

Douglas Johnson, Tenor

American lyric tenor Douglas Johnson has been widely acclaimed in European music capitals since his debut in Aachen in 1984. His roles there led to a contract with the Hannover Opera. In 1988 he joined the Frankfurt Opera to sing Ferrando, Lysander (*Midsummer Night's Dream*) and Belfione (*La Finta Giardiniera*) and expanded his guest appearances to London, Munich, and Nice. He has appeared at the Salzburg Festival, in new productions of *Moses und Aron* under James Levine, in Mozart's *Vesperae de Domenica* and Beethoven's *Mass in C*, and in *Idomeneo*, which he also sang with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood. Mr. Johnson's recordings include Mozart's *La Finta Semplice* and *L'Oca del Cairo* with Peter Schreier for Philips, the title role of Gazzaniga's *Don Giovanni* for Sony, and Haydn's *Cantata Applausus* for Erato.

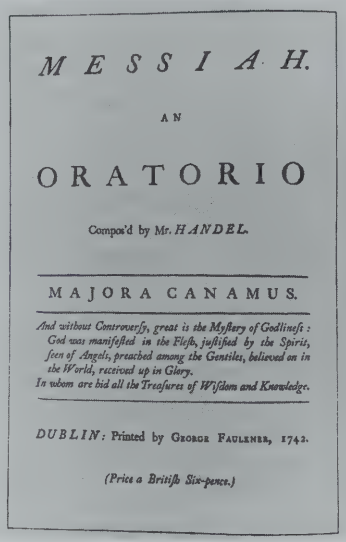
David Murray, Baritone



David Murray studied at the New England Conservatory of Music, and was a winner of the 1990 Liederkranz Foundation competition in New York. He has performed with opera companies and orchestras throughout the United States, including Boston Lyric Opera, Lake George Opera Festival, Central City Opera, Eugene Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, and the Nashua and Denver Symphony Orchestras. Mr. Murray recently returned from his European operatic debut, singing the roles of Figaro in Rossini's *Il Barbieri di Siviglia*, and Marcello in Puccini's *La Bohème*, while on tour throughout France and Spain.

One of the pleasures of a world premiere is the uncertainty of the event. Will the new work prove to be a magnificent addition to the artistic heritage of humanity, a complete disaster, or something in between? Will the first audience justly evaluate a work's qualities, or will the listeners overrate or too easily dismiss the novelty of the piece? In retrospect, of course, it is easy to label the first performance of *Messiah* in Dublin on April 13, 1742, a great event deserving special commemoration when the new work reaches an age of a quarter-millennium. Yet, despite the success of the first performance, a number of years passed before it was clear that *Messiah* would turn out to be one of the most famous and best-loved compositions of all time, and performing it would become an annual rite all over the English-speaking world—and eventually everywhere else, too.

Messiah was rather a new sort of work for Handel, even in the realm of oratorio, to which he had recently and rather reluctantly turned, after a string of failures in the opera house. For decades he had tried to win English audiences to the delights of Italian opera, with which he began his career in Germany, Italy, and finally England. He had enjoyed both splendid successes and monumental failures, the latter partly owing to the high cost of operatic productions and the fees of the most famous Italian singers, but eventually also to the fact that aristocratic audiences who paid for such things rather lost interest, while the middle-class audience had never found much enchantment from listening to dramas in an incomprehensible language.



MESSIAH.

AN

ORATORIO

Compos'd by Mr. *HANDEL.*

MAJORA CANAMUS.

And without Controverſy, great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs: God was manifeſted in the Fleſh, juſtified by the Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the World, received up in Glory.
In whom are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge.

DUBLIN: Printed by GEORGE FAULKNER, 1742.

(Price a Britiſh Six-pence.)

The title page of the wordbook of Messiah, as performed at Neal's Musick Hall, Dublin, in 1742

THE RISE OF THE ENGLISH ORATORIO

As early as 1718, Handel had composed dramatic works in English, the little pastoral gem *Acis and Galatea* and the somewhat more uneven *Esther*, although these were performed in private circumstances outside of London and had no effect on the musical life of the metropolis. But in 1732, after some disillusionment in the opera house, Handel brought out revised versions of both pieces, which attracted public interest for large-scale musical entertainments in their own tongue. During the remainder of the decade his operas were often commercial failures, while audiences welcomed a slowly growing string of oratorios. It gradually became Handel's practice to produce his oratorios during the season of Lent, when stage performances with costumes and theatrical paraphernalia were banned by ecclesiastical authorities. The vacant theaters were thus available for unstaged musical performances.

The use of English texts enticed a much broader middle-class audience than the opera had succeeded in luring. Moreover, the plots usually came from the Hebrew scriptures, stories long familiar to the audiences and often comprehensible in modern political terms. The presence of a chorus, almost unknown in Italian opera, added particular musical interest, especially when it turned out that Handel was one of the great masters of choral writing.

Still, Handel tried again and again, in the fact of rising costs and public apathy, to promote his beloved Italian opera. Then a stroke in the spring of 1737 partly crippled him and somewhat affected his powers of invention. The utter failure of *Serse* in the spring of 1738 caused him to turn to oratorio fully, with *Saul*, one of the great musical dramas in the English language. Even then opera remained in his heart. He composed his final such work, *Deidamia*, in November 1740, which survived for just three performances the following January. Handel was in severe financial straits; newspapers reported that he was planning to leave England, apparently to go to a spa in Germany. An invitation to produce a season in Dublin was no doubt welcome after his recent failures in London.

Actually, Handel's plans for the 1741-42 season seem to have been uncertain for a long time. At this juncture he received from Charles Jennens, who had already written the librettos to *Saul* and *Belshazzar* (and possibly that for *Israel in Egypt* as well), a new oratorio text of a quite different kind—a collection of Biblical passages conceived not as drama, with

dialogue between characters, but rather as a contemplation on the prophetic foretelling of a Messiah and the effects of the Messiah's arrival and heavenly reign. In July 1741, Jennens wrote to a friend that Handel had no plans yet for the following season, "but I hope I shall perswade him to set another Scriptural Collection I have made for him, & perform it for his own Benefit in Passion Week. I hope he will lay out his whole Genius & Skill upon it, that the Composition may excell all his former Compositions, as the Subject excells every other Subject."

The composition of *Messiah* went at a miraculous pace. Handel told Jennens that he expected to take a year to set the text to music, but he actually completed the entire score in just twenty-three days of feverish composition, between August 22 and September 14, 1741, of which the last two days were used in "filling up" the details of the score that he had drafted, almost at improvisatory speed, in the preceding three weeks. The small orchestral ensemble called for—trumpets, drums, strings, and continuo—suggests the possibility that he may have originally intended the work for performance in a relatively out-of-the-way place like Dublin. In any case, he quickly turned from *Messiah* to the drafting of a more typical oratorio, *Samson*, with a larger orchestra and a dramatic subject. But he did not complete *Samson* in its final details before leaving for Ireland, and it remained unperformed until the following season.

The Dublin Journal reported that Messiah "was allowed by the greatest judges to be the finest Composition of Musick that ever was heard."

The final plans for the Irish visit must have been completed rather suddenly. Jennens was certainly surprised to discover, when he returned to the city in November for his normal winter season "in town," that Handel had gone away: "it was with some mortification to me to hear that instead of performing [*Messiah*] here he was gone into Ireland with it."

The Dublin Performance

Handel planned *Messiah* in such a way that it could be performed with only four soloists—one each of soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. This seems an obvious arrangement for us today, but he had never had such a cast in his previous oratorios in London. Since he had yet to book (or even hear) many of the singers who would be available in Dublin, he apparently composed the score without necessarily thinking of specific voices, a rather unusual procedure for him (though he was later to make changes and adjustments for the circumstances of specific performances).

Handel planned a subscription season in Dublin of six concerts, with two performances each of *L'Allegro, Acis and Galatea*, and *Esther* between late December and mid-February. The success of these prompted a second subscription series, ending on April 7, with performances of *Alexander's Feast* and an unstaged production of the opera *Imeneo*, as well as repetitions from the earlier series. By this time Handel was embarked on plans for the premiere of the new work, and already—as happened in every performance he gave to the end of his life—he offered it for charity:

> For Relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the support of the Mercer's Hospital in Stephen's-street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inns Quay, on Monday the 12th of April, will be performed at the Musick Hall in Fishamble Street, Mr. Handel's new Grand Oratorio call'd the Messiah, in which the Gentlemen of the Choirs of both Cathedrals will assist, with some Concertoes on the Organ, by Mr. Handell.

As it turned out, the performance took place a day later than the date mentioned in the announcement, preceded by an open rehearsal for ticket-holders on April 9; this aroused enormous enthusiasm for the piece. As the *Dublin Journal* reported on the 10th, it "was allowed by the greatest Judges to be the finest Composition of Musick that ever was heard."

Since the performance was designed to raise money for charity, it was desirable to sell as many tickets as possible. A special announcement appeared to that end in the *Dublin Journal*:

> The Stewards of the Charitable Musical Society request the Favour of the Ladies not to come with Hoops [in their dresses] this Day to the Musick-Hall in Fishamble Street: The Gentlemen are desired to come without their Swords.

By this means, a hall designed to seat 600 actually accommodated 700 on the auspicious occasion.

Though designed for a possible cast of four soloists, Handel actually used seven on this first occasion, disposed like the singers in the present performance. We know that Handel reworked elements of *Messiah* on many occasions, often for

specific singers, and that the music heard on April 13, 1742, is often quite different from versions that became standardized in the published scores of a later century. The present performance, however, reconstructs, as best contemporary scholarship can do, the musical text of the work as heard by its first, enraptured audience.

Handel's Legacy

Following Handel's death, the continuing—and growing—popularity of *Messiah* made Handel the most seriously misunderstood and misrepresented of all the great composers. The one-sided view of Handel progressed so far in the century after his death that a Victorian writer could claim "all Handel's fine Italian airs" to be "essentially of a sacred character," and even today we hear only a small fraction of his large output, with insufficient attention to the dramatic works, though we now realize at last that his essential inspiration was always human and dramatic, not sacred.

Messiah, then, remains unique, among the least typical of Handel's oratorios. Yet, though we may justifiably lament the fact that the other great oratorios have been eclipsed by it, there is no reason to bemoan the work's great popularity; it is consistently of a high level of musical inspiration. Divided into a symbolic three sections, *Messiah* tells no story in explicit dramatic terms, but rather provides a series of meditations on the prophecy and realization of God's plan for the redemption of mankind through the coming of the Messiah. Handel arranged his text as a series of "scenes" consisting of a recitative followed by an aria and then a chorus. The recitative explains a situation, to which the aria provides an individual lyrical response; the chorus then supplies the communal response of Christendom. Each such "scene" is a self-contained harmonic unit in the overall plan.

From the magically simple minor-to-major shift at the end of the overture and the opening of the tenor's first recitative on the words "Comfort ye," the music overflows with wonderful imagery and nature-painting to mirror the text; at the same time the arias provide expressive interpretations of the meaning behind the texts—and display the imaginative powers of a composer who knew and loved the human voice as few have ever done. And the choruses provide the center of gravity; they include some of the greatest examples of the choral art of the Baroque, and, indeed, of all time. If Handel treats the solo voice with singular skill, he offers equally rich treasures in the intertwining of four parts, weaving the lines into delicate contrapuntal webs that suddenly coalesce into mighty blocks of the hammering sound. *Messiah* offers example after example of music that will remain at the heart of the choral repertory as long as we continue to sing.

—Steven Ledbetter

Steven Ledbetter is musicologist and program annotator for the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

For Further Reading and Listening

Christopher Hogwood has written the introduction for a new *Messiah* wordbook, published this year by Harper Collins. Also published in the past year by the Cambridge Music Handbook Series is an important new study by Donald Burrows, *Handel: Messiah.*

Notable recordings of *Messiah* include Christopher Hogwood and the Academy of Ancient Music on period instruments (London/L'Oiseau-Lyre); Sir Colin Davis with the London Symphony and Chorus (Philips). Nicholas McGegan and the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra have made an unusual recording that allows the listener to program any of Handel's alternate versions (Harmonia Mundi). —*S.L.*

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Trumpet
Crispian Steele-Perkins, *soloist*
Dennis Alves *(soloist Dec. 12)*
Jesse Levine (*Dec. 5,6,12*)

Harpsichord
John Finney

Organ
James David Christie

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Messiah, A Sacred Oratorio

Original English text taken from the Scriptures by Charles Jennens

Part the First

Sinfony

Recitative, accompanied (Tenor)
Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God: Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplish'd, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of Him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (Isaiah XL, 1-3)

Aria (Tenor)
Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight and the rough places plain. (Isaiah XL, 4)

Chorus
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. And all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. (Isaiah XL, 5)

Recitative, accompanied (Bass I)
Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Yet once a little while, and I will shake the heav'ns and the earth, the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in, behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. (Haggai II, 6-7; Malachi III, 1)

Recitative (Bass I)
But who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire. (Malachi III, 2)

Chorus
And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. (Malachi III, 3)

Recitative (Alto I)
Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel, "God with us". (Isaiah VII, 14; Matthew I, 23)

Aria and Chorus (Alto I)
O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion get Thee up into the high mountain; O Thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem lift up Thy voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: Behold your God! Arise, shine, for Thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon Thee. (Isaiah XL, 9; LX, 1)

Recitative, accompanied (Bass I)
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon Thee, and His glory shall be seen upon Thee. And the Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising. (Isaiah IX, 2-3)

Aria (Bass I)
The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. And they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. (Isaiah IX, 2)

Chorus
For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called: Wonderful Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace! (Isaiah IX, 6)

Pifa

Recitative (Soprano)
There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. (Luke II, 8)

Arioso (Soprano)
And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. (Luke II, 9)

Recitative (Soprano)
And the angel said unto them: Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Luke II, 10-11)

Recitative, accompanied (Soprano)
And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heav'nly host, praising God, and saying: (Luke II, 13)

Chorus
Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will toward men. (Luke II, 14)

Aria (Soprano)
Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King com'th unto thee. He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen. (Zechariah IX, 9-10)

Recitative (Contralto)
Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. (Isaiah XXXV, 5-6)

Aria (Contralto)
He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. Come unto Him, all ye that labour, come unto Him all ye are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him; for he is meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (Isaiah XL, 11; Matthew XI, 28- 29)

Chorus
His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light. (Matthew XI, 30)

Part the Second

Chorus
Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. (John I, 29)

Aria (Contralto)
He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: he hid not his face from shame and spitting. (Isaiah LIII, 3: 1,6)

Chorus
Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. (Isaiah LIII, 4-5)

Chorus
And with His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah LIII, 5)

Chorus
All we like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned ev'ry one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah LIII, 6)

Recitative, accompanied (Tenor)
All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying: (Psalm XXII, 7)

Chorus
He trusted in God that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, if he delight in Him. (Psalm XXII, 8)

Recitative, accompanied (Soprano)
Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He is full of heaviness; He looked for some to have pity on him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him. (Psalm LXIX, 21)

Arioso (Soprano)
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow. (Lamentations I, 2)

Recitative, accompanied (Soprano)
He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of Thy people was He stricken. (Isaiah LIII, 8)

Aria (Soprano)
But thou didst not leave his soul in hell; nor didst thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. (Psalm XVI, 10)

Chorus
Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts: He is the King of glory. (Psalm XXV, 7-10)

Recitative (Tenor)
Unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee? (Hebrews I, 5)

Chorus
Let all the angels of God worship Him. (Hebrews I, 6)

Aria (Bass I)
Thou art gone up on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even for Thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them. (Psalm LXVIII, 18)

Chorus
The Lord gave the word; great was the company of the preachers. (Psalm LXVIII, 11)

Duet and Chorus (Alto 1 and 2)
How beautiful are the feet of Him that bring glad tidings of salvation, that saith unto Zion: Thy God reigneth! Break forth into joy glad tidings. (Romans X, 15)

Aria (Bass II)
Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and His anointed. (Psalm II, 1-2)

Chorus
Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us. (Psalm II, 3)

Recitative (Tenor)
He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn, the Lord shall have them in derision. (Psalm II, 4)

Aria (Tenor)
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. (Psalm II, 9)

Chorus
Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The Kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah.
(Revelation XIX, 6; XI, 15; XIX, 16)

Part the Third

Aria (Soprano)
I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And tho' worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep. (Job XIX, 25-26; I Corinthians XV, 20)

Chorus
Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (I Corinthians XV, 21, 22)

Recitative, accompanied (Bass I)
Behold I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be chang'd, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. (I Corinthians XV, 51-52)

Aria (Bass I)
The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be rais'd incorruptible, and we shall be chang'd. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (I Corinthians XV, 52-54)

Recitative (Contralto)
Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallow'd up in victory. (I Corinthians XV, 54)

Duet (Alto 2 and Tenor)
O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. (I Corinthians XV, 55-57)

Chorus
But thanks be to Gold, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (I Corinthians XV, 55-57)

Aria (Contralto)
If God is for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us. (Romans VIII, 31, 33-34)

Chorus
Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, glory, and pow'r be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. (Revelation V, 12-13)

Chorus
Amen.

Why Not Stand?

The Hallelujah chorus often inspires people to stand, notes Artistic Director Christopher Hogwood. The custom of rising for the opening of the Hallelujah chorus, however, prevents listeners from hearing some of Handel's finest work.

Part Two of *Messiah* is a masterpiece of construction, not least the gathering momentum and constant sense of surprise during the last fifteen minutes. From the bass outburst of "Why do the nations so furiously rage together?" through to the final declaration that God will break his enemies "like a potter's vessel: Hallelujah," the sequence of mood and tempi is wonderfully sustained.

Nothing is more telling of Handel's dramatic mastery than the opening bars of the *Hallelujah* chorus. It begins without demonstration—no trumpets, drums, or even voices; simply the sound of the string orchestra. When the chorus does enter, with demonstrations of how diversely the word "Hallelujah" can be accented, the trumpets and drums are still unheard. Handel is incorporating in this finale all the intimations of the gradual spread of gospel jubilation—from initial subdued wordlessness to full triumph.

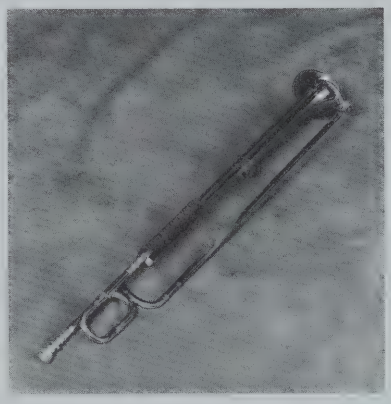
Since there is no indication at the start of the chorus that anything unusual is about to happen, the ritual of hundreds of listeners suddenly gathering and rising to their feet manages to obliterate those first important orchestral bars, and there must be many first-time listeners who never manage to hear the opening of the chorus and must consequently still be wondering what it is all about!

With the help of H&H audiences, we can return Handel's masterpiece to being a living, surprising, and "new-minted" experience. It simply means restraining your enthusisasm for a few moments more, letting Handel have his way, and then springing up *after* the final chord.

—Christopher Hogwood

H&H *Hear the Difference*
H&H and Historically Informed Performance

The *Messiah* you are hearing is an example of an "Historically Informed Performance." This style of musical performance—"HIP" as it has become known—began in the 1970s when a group of innovative musical thinkers asked challenging questions of current performance practices, such as "If the piano was not available to Bach in his time, why do we use it now when performing his works?" The result of such questions was a completely new—and old—way of performing the music of Baroque and Classical composers. HIP performances enable audiences to hear this music as it would have sounded to early audiences—played on the instruments and with the performing forces available to the composers.



Christopher Hogwood was one of the founders of HIP, and continues to lead the movement today. He defines its purpose as "introducing music of the Classical and Baroque styles in a historically scrupulous way." In addition to using authentic instruments and appropriately-sized performance groups—smaller than modern symphony orchestras—HIP performances use the most up-to-date scholarship, and newly edited scores. Mr. Hogwood is also interested in historic concert context, asking how specific works would have been performed within an actual concert program.

The difference between music played on original and on modern instruments, Mr. Hogwood explains, can be understood only through the listening experience. "Modern instruments, which were built to be used in large auditoriums, are deluxe machines; they are rich, full, bright. Original instruments sound sweeter, leaner, less heavy. Often, they are more transparent, more articulate, more rhythmic. What is significant is that the sound they produce enables us to approach more accurately the style and sound of the classical composers. We follow their conventions; we do not force them to follow ours."

The H&H Period Orchestra

Since Christopher Hogwood became Artistic Director in 1986, H&H has given historically informed performances on period instruments, and under his guidance, has formed one of the nation's most respected period orchestras. Several of the instruments you see in the H&H orchestra were actually built in the Baroque or Classical periods; others are replicas designed after specific historic models. The most visible difference between modern and period orchestras is in the woodwind section where the instruments are actually made of wood—look at the oboes and bassoons in this performance, for example. Look, also, at the trumpets: brass instruments from the Baroque period have simpler lines and no valves. Differences you can hear more than see include the use of gut strings instead of steel, and lower pitches. These earlier instruments can be more difficult to play, resulting in a smaller corps of professional musicians who specialize in period performance.

The H&H Chorus

Founded in 1815, the Handel & Haydn Society has a long and continuous choral tradition. The face of the chorus, however, has changed dramatically over its 178-year history. In the nineteenth century, the Society's large, amateur chorus had a prominent role in Boston's musical life, and was responsible for American premieres of several important choral works, including Handel's *Messiah* in 1818 , and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in 1879. It also reflected popular fascination with large-size performing forces; in 1857, the Society gave a performance with the largest chorus in its history—700 singers! A century later, as H&H was observing its 150th anniversary in the mid-1960s, the Society moved to a fully professional chorus. The H&H chorus is now a highly regarded group, made up of just over 30 young, professional singers, and has been called "one of the glories of Boston's musical life" by the Boston Globe. The chorus is featured on H&H's latest recording on London/L'Oiseau-Lyre, of Mozart's orchestration of Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, as well as in a recording on Denon of Mozart's *C Minor Mass* with the Boston Early Musical Festival.

H&H's other critically acclaimed recordings on London/L'Oiseau-Lyre are of Handel's *Concerti Grossi Op. 3*, and Haydn Arias and Cantatas with Arleen Auger.

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The Conductor's Circle of the Handel & Haydn Society brings together individuals who express their deep commitment to Baroque and Classical music by generously donating $1,000 or more to the Annual Fund. The generosity of Conductor's Circle members has enabled Artistic Director Christopher Hogwood to establish H&H as a premier period instrument orchestra in the United States and as a national leader in historically informed performance.

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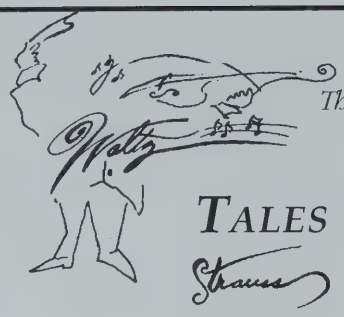

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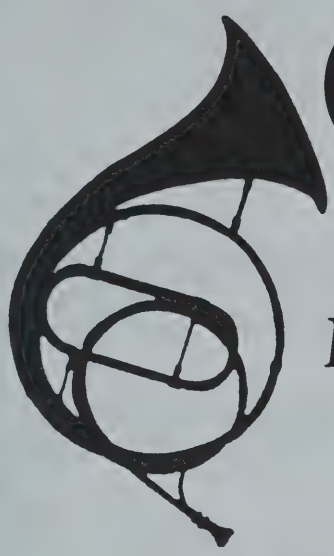

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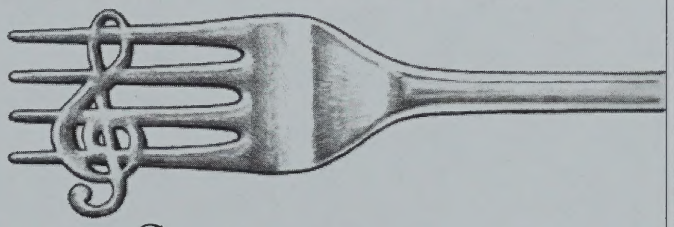

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John Finney, fortepiano
Works by Mozart and Haydn; part songs; arrangements of Scottish folk songs

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